the Astronomic Student Student

State economy drives revenue growth

Unemployment rate also improves

By PETER WONG Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon's state coffers continue to add personal and corporate income taxes at a record pace, state economists told lawmakers, although there are other signs that pace will slow soon.

Though the state's two-year budget cycle has almost 18 more months to go, the newest projections put the state on track for a \$553 million return of excess personal income taxes in spring 2024 — in the form of credits reducing taxes owed — and a \$250 million return of corporate income taxes into the State School Fund.

"That is still up in the air," Mark McMullen, the state economist, told members of the state House and Senate revenue committees on Wednesday. A determination of whether there are excess taxes will await the September 2023 forecast, the first after the budget cycle closes in June 2023.

Still, he said, the state withheld a record amount of personal income taxes in October — a sign that people are working and collected a record in corporate income taxes. Those two sources account for more than 90% of the general fund, the most flexible support for state services and aid to public schools. Oregon Lottery sales also have recovered from pandemic lows.

"All of Oregon's indicators are outstripping expectations. The revenue boom continues unabated," McMullen said. "Unfortunately, our recent revenue forecasts have called for tax collections to return back to earth. They will continue to grow, but come back to more sustainable levels."



Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian Ed Overbay stands in front of one of the windows the students restored and installed in the woodworking shop.

Port, college collaborate on window restoration

Students work on building near Airport Industrial Park

> By ETHAN MYERS The Astorian

ARRENTON — The Port of Astoria, Clatsop Community College and Overbay Houseworks are collaborating to restore windows on a building across from the Airport Industrial Park.

Ed Överbay and his staff build cabinets, doors, staircases and other household products in the woodworking shop. The building, which Overbay has occupied since 1979, is owned by the Port. While the structure has handled storms and flooding for over four decades and remains in fairly good condition, one restoration project desperately needed to be undertaken: the windows.



A restored window is shown

deputy director, said.

So Overbay came up with an idea. He had a hand in starting the historic preservation program at Clatsop Community College, which teaches students about the theory and history of restoration, and gives them hands-on experience through projects across the region.

Overbay thought the program could tackle restoration of his windows.

"I brainstormed this idea. This gives the college program a good opportunity to do this kind of restoration," he said. "The windows are, by and large, accessible as opposed to a lot of situations and they're almost all exactly the same size so I thought it would be a good drill for the college program ... and it would be a good opportunity for the building.

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woodworking shop.

The Port is responsible for taking care of the outside of the building. "We have been behind on maintenance out there for years," Matt McGrath, the Port's

"I want to see the building maintained, I love this building."

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Killer apologizes to family of slain trooper

Prosecutors, family oppose Sture's release

By ERICK BENGEL The Astorian

A man who murdered an Oregon State Police officer in Knappa 41 years ago argued at a parole hearing Wednesday that he is ready for release.

But members of the Oregon Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision worry about whether Michael Edward Sture will stay sober, and minimize his risk of violence, if he is freed.

The hearing, Sture's first in 10 years, was an exit interview to determine whether the board should firm up or defer his projected release date in May.

Sture shot Sgt. James D. Shepherd to death in the Knappa woodlands on May 22, 1980.

The trooper was off duty, riding a borrowed motorcycle and looking into possible malfeasance in an area near his house. Sture shot Shepherd three times — first in the chest while the officer was on his bike, then twice





Sgt. James D. Shepherd was a 23-year veteran of the Oregon State Police.

in the head. He used two different guns.

The reasons for the shooting are still unclear.

Sture, then 23, had already been in prison for car theft. He told the parole board on Wednesday that he sensed Shepherd was a cop and feared being taken back to prison. Although Sture said years ago that he didn't want Shepherd coming across his marijuana grow site, Clatsop County District Attorney Ron Brown said at the hearing that "the police never found marijuana plants."

When state trooper Brian

Johnson found his colleague's body, Sture made him lie on the ground at gunpoint but didn't physically injure him. He took off with Shepherd's bike.

A manhunt ensued, but Sture had left the North Coast. He was apprehended days later while hitchhiking in central Oregon.

Sture was eventually sentenced to prison for a period of his natural life, but the possibility of release always hung in the air.

Unlike at his previous parole hearings, Sture apologized to the Shepherd family. "I'm sorry. I am so heartsick about what I done. The last 40 years, every year that goes by, it just gets heavier and heavier," he said. "And I just wanted to say that."

The parole board will decide Sture's fate at a later date. He will receive a written decision.

Drug abuse

Much of the parole board's discussion with Sture on Wednesday focused on his lengthy history of drug abuse, a habit that ran through his decades in prison.

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Parents condemn vaccine mandate

Some warn they will pull students from school

By ETHAN MYERS The Astorian

Several parents and others from the community expressed worries to the Knappa school board Wednesday evening about a student vaccine mandate to help contain the coronavirus.

Many of the comments were spirited and echoed anti-mask and anti-vaccine sentiments, particularly for children, urging the school board to stand up against any potential state guidance requiring vaccines.

"Let's act before vaccine mandates come down," Ashley Meadows, a resident, said. "We risk a massive student exodus and we just passed a huge bond measure. Let's be sure every child gets to benefit without prejudice."

Each comment was followed by loud applause from the nearly two dozen people who attended the meeting, many of whom are associated with the Knappa Parents Organization. The group has spoken out in the past over a middle school health curriculum and other topics.

"Our state does it on different topics to the federal government — you can say 'no."We can say 'no,""Adam Brown, a resident, said.

A survey conducted by the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center in October showed about 57% of Oregonians support vaccine mandates for children 12 and older. Just 45% of parents support a mandate, however.

A possible student vaccine mandate was added as a discussion item to the agenda in Knappa after a request by school board member Michelle Finn. She said board member Christa Jasper, who was not present at the meeting, felt similarly and also wanted it on the agenda.

Finn said she wanted to tackle the topic after hearing concerns from the community. She said she has heard from some parents that if a student vaccine mandate were adopted,

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